



MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Relations Committee

FROM: Avis Meade, Communications Coordinator

DATE: April 12, 2021

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Village Board and Community Room Technology Updates

About the Village's Audio Visual and Broadcasting System

The Village of Lombard utilizes an audio/visual, or AV system to record and broadcast Village Board and Plan Commission Meetings. The system is also used for public and internal presentations, employee training, and production of PSAs. The system was last upgraded in 2006. While it has been patched and fixed many times over the past 15 years, the system is now outdated to the point in which a complete replacement is required.

The analog system that is currently in place was installed in March 2006. At that time, the addition of the current presentation system, (projectors, screens, Doc Camera,) was added and a digital upgrade was made to the audio-video system in the Board Room, (cameras, audio processor and lighting).

Aged Equipment Has Reached Lifespan

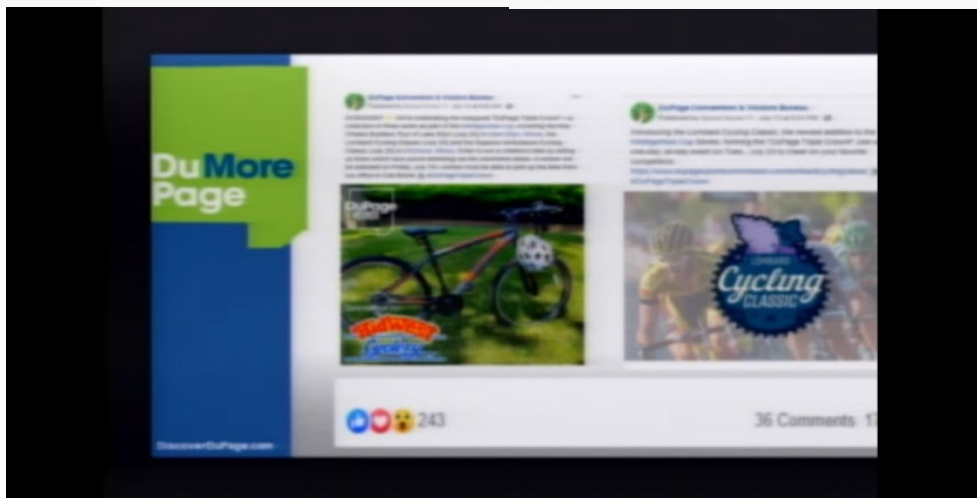
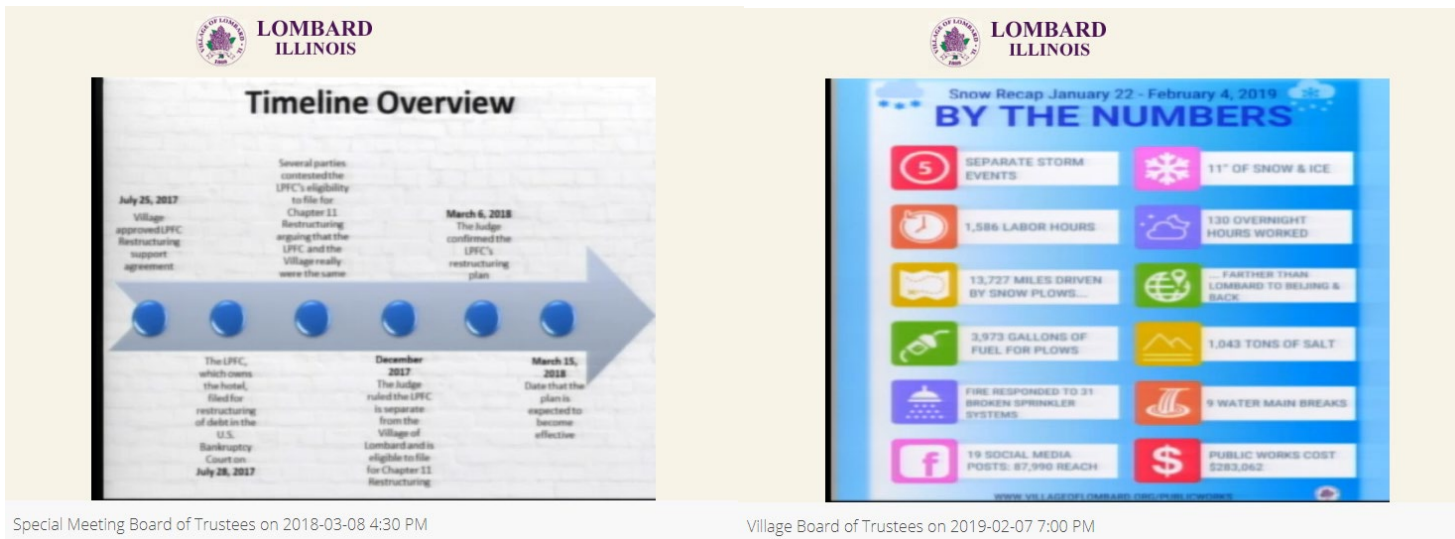
As the equipment has aged over the past 15 years, every effort has been made to service or replace non-functioning equipment and hardware. Malfunctioning and failing equipment have created challenges for staff that have resulted in recording, presentation, and broadcast difficulties and issues.

Staff has been advised by industry consultants that they can no longer repair any future equipment issues as the devices have reached their operating lifespan. Should the current technology experience another error, the Village would face an extreme challenge because the equipment used is no longer supported or replaceable.

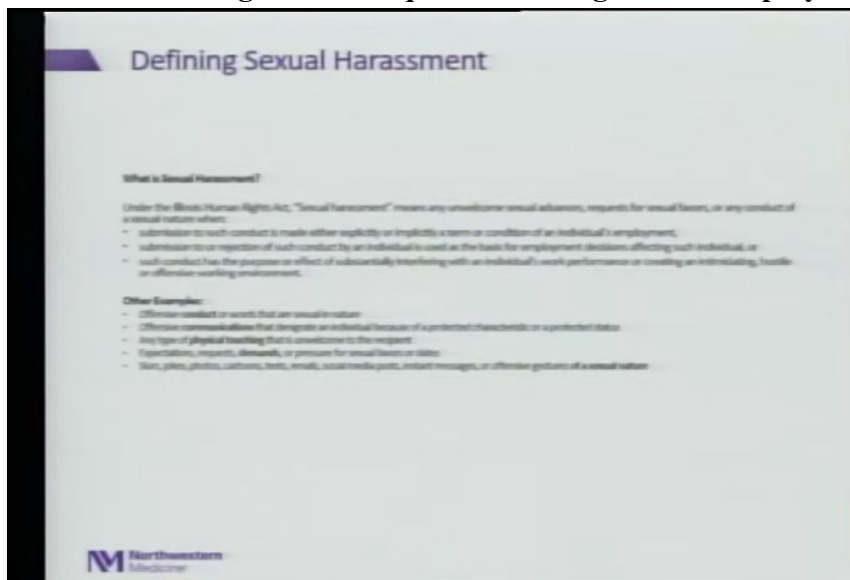
Video Quality for Broadcast of Meetings and Meeting Recordings or Presentations

A High Definition, or HD signal, is the standard for digital video streaming. Audiences are accustomed to the audio and visual clarity that an HD broadcast feed provides. Because the Village's analog equipment is limited, broadcasting and recording in HD is not possible. Therefore, the Village Board and Plan Commission Meetings that are broadcast live on the Village's website at www.villageoflombard.org/live, and are later available for viewing on the Village's website at www.villageoflombard.org/meetings, are available in a low-quality resolution. This results in reduced visual and audio quality for viewers. These concerns have been amplified by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to meeting capacity restrictions and the heightened expectation for public viewing and participation of meetings. Video quality for recorded employee trainings are also a concern, as presentations are often difficult to read. The Village has received complaints from residents and employees regarding video and audio quality, including the inability to read items on the screen.

Visual Examples of Low-Resolution Analog Feed



Internal Training Video: Required Viewing for All Employees



Comcast & AT&T Quality

The Village has two cable agreements with Comcast (channel 6) and AT&T U-verse, (channel 99) to broadcast the Lombard Channel. Currently, Comcast and AT&T do not support an HD signal, however some local municipalities are negotiating their current cable agreements to include future capability of broadcasting in HD. With this project, the Village can be prepared for when cable companies advance their system to HD programming. In the interim, once the upgrades have been made, online livestream and videos archived on the Village website will be in high definition.

Pricing Breakdown

AT&T Cable subscribers pay a Public Education Government Channel (PEG) fund when paying their cable bills, which are remitted to the State and distributed to local municipalities. This fund is reserved for expenditures related to capital costs for PEG access facilities and equipment.

Upgrades to the system will be funded primarily through the existing AT&T PEG funds, and not through the Village's general fund. Prior expenditures from the AT&T PEG fund have been limited and the Village's current fund balance totals in excess of \$90,000, of which may be used toward this project.

The Village has solicited estimates from technology companies for the two-step project, which includes the rewiring/infrastructure upgrades, and the technology upgrades for the Village Board Room and the Community Room at Village Hall.

- Hardware infrastructure updates: Approximately, \$10,000 - 15,000.
- Physical AV updates (camera, audio recording equipment): Approximately \$80,000 - 90,000.

Staff Recommendation

It is the recommendation of Village Staff to upgrade the AV system in the Village Board Room, to help ensure a reliable broadcast of Board and Plan Commission Meetings to the public, to upgrade PEG facilities and equipment, and to provide staff with the ability to present effectively.

It is the recommendation of Village Staff to move forward with the proposed project and make the necessary Board Room improvements, utilizing the existing PEG fund to help fund the majority of the improvements.